



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# SUPERINTENDENT LUNA ANNOUNCES IDAHO TEACHER OF THE YEAR

COEUR D'ALENE – Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna announced today a Coeur d'Alene high school teacher has been honored as the 2014 Idaho Teacher of the Year.

Jamie Esler, a science teacher at Lake City High School, was named the 2014 Idaho Teacher of the Year in a surprise announcement at his school Friday morning. When his name was announced, students at Lake City High erupted in "We love Esler!" chants.

"I am honored Jamie Esler will be representing the State of Idaho as our state's nominee for National Teacher of the Year," Superintendent Luna said. "Even though he is young in his career, Esler has been recognized as an outstanding teacher because he strives every day to make sure his students are not only learning about science but learning to how to apply those concepts in the real world."

This is the third consecutive year a teacher from Coeur d'Alene has won this prestigious award, selected by a statewide committee of representatives.

As Idaho Teacher of the Year, Esler will receive \$1,000 from the Idaho State Department of Education, an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., and go on to represent Idaho as a nominee for the National Teacher of the Year.

In accepting the award Friday morning, Esler thanked his fellow teachers and colleagues at Lake City High who he said support him every day. He also addressed the students at Lake City High: "We can teach until we're blue in the face. We can give things back to you on time. We can give you the best lessons we have got, but ultimately, your success is up to you. Keep that in mind."

The Idaho Teacher of the Year program began in 1959 and has become one of the most prestigious honors in the state for teachers. The program focuses public attention on excellence in teaching that has a real impact on the students of Idaho. Every year, school districts and charter schools across Idaho have the opportunity to nominate one teacher for the Idaho Teacher of the Year. A state selection committee representing teachers, education leaders, parents and legislators from across the state select the Idaho Teacher of the Year from among the nominations.

To learn more about the Idaho Teacher of the Year program, visit [http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/teacher\\_of\\_year/](http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/teacher_of_year/).

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### About Idaho's 2014 Teacher of the Year: Jamie Esler

Jamie Esler is a science teacher at Lake City High School in Coeur d'Alene. He has been a science teacher for five years. Though early in his career, he has clearly demonstrated his passion for education. He strives every day to make sure the students in his classroom are not only learning about science but that they are engaged and that they know how these science concepts apply in the real world.

Esler has been recognized by his local school district for his talents. He was named a Rookie of the Year teacher when he first began. Last May, he was named Coeur d'Alene's Teacher of the Year. But according to his colleagues, his skills as an effective educator are apparent as soon as you walk into his classroom.

One person said anyone would be "absolutely blow away" by his skill and ability to captivate and engage students. Why? At the heart of it, is the fact that Mr. Esler uses real-world examples in reinforce the lessons he is teaching in his classroom. He takes his students outside so they can see science in action.

On one project, Mr. Esler's students collected water quality data and uploaded it onto a public database. They used the Idaho Education Network to communicate with other schools in this region about their results. Students also put their writing skills to work in science class, blogging about what they found.

Mr. Esler also finds ways to extend the school year for his students. For example, when he travels during the summer, he keeps a blog and posts videos so his students can track his travels and take "virtual field trips" with him. This continues to bring learning to life for every child in his classroom throughout the summer months.

Mr. Esler also embraces technology in his classroom. He recognizes that students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century know technology and use it every day. But as a teacher, he emphasizes that students must learn to use technology responsibly. He shows students how technology can be used to address many environmental and scientific challenges we are facing in the world today, such as access to clean drinking water or the development of renewable energy sources.

As Idaho's Teacher of the Year, and our state's nominee for National Teacher of the Year, Mr. Esler says he will work to inspire students and teachers to make better use of technology in the classroom and outside of the classroom as they learn about science and the natural world. It is clear he has already accomplished this within his own classroom. I know I am excited to learn from what Mr. Esler has learned and share his best practices with the rest of the state.

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